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Washington State Christmas Tree Advisory Committee

Letter from your Advisory Committee

Dear Washington Growers:

Our cooperative efforts to promote and protect our trees and our markets continue, and we value the relationship with our partners at the Department of Agriculture. The Christmas Tree Grower Advisory Committee met in April, and would like to thank Greg Reid for his service to the industry and welcome Bruce Wiseman to the group.

As license fees paid by growers accumulate, the Advisory Committee recommends the research, survey, or other projects that would be of most benefit to growers to be funded by the Department. Since 2012, the WSDA Christmas Tree License Program (CTLP) has provided a

total of \$24,500 in support of ongoing disease and postharvest quality research at WSU Puyallup. In addition to directly supporting specific research, we have been able to leverage these funds by using them as a “cash match” on larger grants that we have obtained to support the Christmas tree research program at Puyallup.

Industry surveys show that needle loss is one of the top reasons cited for dissatisfaction with real trees. This spring, the Committee recommended an additional \$10,000 in support of a project to improve post-harvest needle retention on cut Christmas trees. These funds are being used as a “cash match” for a \$62,666 proposal

that has been submitted to the WSDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program.

All growers benefit and will receive the results of this research through communication with WSDA, or through educational programs sponsored by the PNWCTGA or other grower groups. Our partnership with the Department allows us to benefit from the great research infrastructure and faculty at WSU Puyallup at deeply discounted rates.

We will be convening again in September, and would enjoy hearing your thoughts, challenges and successes as a valued member of the Washington Christmas Tree Growing community!

Tips for a Hassle-Free Shipping Season

Do you plan to ship cut greens or wreaths to another state this season? Here are a few guidelines to make sure your shipment arrives without hassle. Shipments without this information are often held by agriculture officials for verification of origin, and inspection before releasing them, or ordering destruction if a pest is found.

For bulk truck shipments of greens or finished wreaths, your invoice or bill of lading must include the following information:

1. Your company's name and address,
2. Statement of Origin such as:

- "Plant Material from Mason County, Washington,"
3. The name and address of the consignee,
4. An itemized list of the products included in the consignment.

For direct/retail mail order shipments, the mailing or shipping label on the outside of the box must include:

1. Your company's name and address,
2. Statement of Origin such as: "Plant Material from King County, Washington,"
3. Consignee's name and address,
4. Statement of contents: such as "one Holiday wreath."

Note: Pine boughs and cones in manufactured wreaths are exempt from California's European Pine Shoot Moth Quarantine. However shipments of bulk unprocessed pine boughs DO require a phytosanitary certificate or certification stamp to meet this quarantine.

Your WSDA inspector can assist you in meeting all state quarantines and phytosanitary requirements of foreign countries. Please contact them as early in the season as possible to allow time for planning and any required treatments of your products.

Check the WSDA website for the inspector that serves your county: <http://agr.wa.gov>



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Christmas Tree Program (WAC 16-401)

Chapter 16-401 WAC requires all Christmas tree growers, except those exempted below, to obtain a Christmas tree grower license. The Christmas tree grower license consists of a \$40 annual license fee plus a \$3 per acre assessment with a maximum of \$5,000. The licensing period for a Christmas tree grower license is February 1 to January 31.

Christmas tree growers whose business consists solely of retail sales are exempt from the licensing requirements if:

- ♦ The grower has less than one acre of Christmas trees; or
- ♦ The grower harvests less than 400 trees annually.

Except for the growers exempted above, all Christmas tree growers must submit an application for a Christmas Tree Grower License and the Christmas tree grower license fee by February 1st each year on the WSDA online certification system called PISCES at <https://fortress.wa.gov/agr/piscs/PlantServices/Login/Login.aspx>.

Christmas tree growers in violation of the chapter may be subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per violation.

For more information on the WSDA Christmas Tree Program, contact Tom Wessels by phone (360) 902-1984 or email: twessels@agr.wa.gov.

A list of currently licensed growers, advisory committee roster and meeting minutes can be found on our website:
<http://agr.wa.gov/PlantsInsects/ChristmasTreeLicense/ChristmasTree.aspx>

FAQ:

Why was the license program started?

We, the growers, asked to start this program 8 years ago. The program was modeled after Oregon's Licensing Program and their issue with Gypsy Moth years ago. With problems like Gypsy Moth, Sudden Oak Death Syndrome, and other pests/diseases, we wanted to be in the best possible position to address any quarantine issues that could arise. Our ability to notify growers of any issue puts us in a much better position with the USDA.

With this licensing program, issues can be addressed locally. It improves our ability to be proactive and work hand in hand with the USDA to *prevent* a general quarantine if an issue does arise, or at the very least have an impact on *minimizing* a quarantine.

Since it's inception, this program has generated over \$50,000 to be used **SOLELY** for programs related to

research or marketing of Washington State Christmas trees. This money does **NOT** go into the State's general fund.

The license program was extended to 2020, per our request. We would like to thank Reps. Drew MacEwen from the 35th district and Ann Rivers from the 18th District for their help getting this passed.

Who is on the Committee?

The committee is made up of 11 people: Six Christmas tree growers ('Growers' Advisory') and five representatives from the Washington State Department of Agriculture. The growers represent everything from small choose and cut farms to large wholesale farms from both sides of the mountains.

What does the Committee do?

We meet twice a year to stay up-to-date on topics like: emerging

pest issues; keeping track of program funding; and how to best use those funds to serve the Christmas tree growers of Washington.

How do I get on the Committee?

Just let anyone at the WSDA or on the advisory committee know you are interested (contact info on Pg. 1) and we will gladly throw your name in the hat. We serve three year terms.

How can my voice be heard?

Call, e-mail or write anyone on the contact list with any questions, ideas for using the funds or getting on the committee. We are here to help Washington State's Christmas tree growers with the issues of the day as it relates to Christmas trees. Let us know what your ideas are or how we can better serve you, the growers of this state.

